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**ARCHAEOLOGY
AS POLITICAL
ACTION**

Randall H. McGuire

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Politics

Although it may seem to be a neutral act to study eighth or thirteenth century Maya, such activity carries profound political effects and implications. Some of these effects stem directly from the ideological assumptions that undergird the research paradigm and interpretive models, whereas others derive from secondary manipulations by persons other than the researcher. Once the archaeologist produces an interpretation of the past, that knowledge has a political life of its own.

Quetzil E. Castañeda (1996:24)

Quetzil Castañeda's studies of Chichén Itzá (1996, 2005) reveal a contested space, a battleground for struggles over economic gain, heritage, and identity. Under Mexican law, the ruins of Chichén Itzá are *patrimonio cultural* (a federally owned heritage site) and are controlled by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia (INAH). INAH employees at the site include archaeologists and the staff members who manage and maintain the park. The Mexican government created Chichén Itzá as a national park to reinforce a nationalist heritage of the Mexican state. Increasingly, in a transition seen at similar sites around the world, the park has been transformed into a market center for heritage tourism.

The growth of Cancún as a resort destination for U.S. and European tourists in the last decades of the twentieth century greatly increased the number of visitors to the site and the money to be made from sale of souvenirs and craft items. The state has given the employees of INAH a monopoly on such sales, but Mayan Indians from the nearby community of Pisté have challenged that monopoly in order to sell their own handicrafts in the park. Three times, during 1983–1987, 1993–1996, and 2003, artisans from Pisté invaded the park to sell their wares. This is

obviously an economic struggle, but it is also a struggle about heritage and identity. The state wishes to project a pleasing image of México and of the Maya to tourists so that these visitors will return and recommend their experience to others. The Mayan Indians contest this expropriation of their culture, heritage, and identity by invading the park.

The local Maya and the state are, however, not the only groups claiming the heritage of Chichén Itzá. The setting sun on the days of the vernal and autumnal equinoxes projects a shadow on the main pyramid that looks like a serpent. This phenomenon has attracted enormous international attention and interest. The INAH puts on a big show, with dancers, music, and theater to attract and entertain the tourists. In the spring of 1989, the equinox also attracted four other groups of people who laid claim to the spirituality of the monument—and indeed to the identity of the ancient Maya: a group of New Age neo-Aztecs, the *Fraternidad Blanca de Quetzalcóatl* (White Brotherhood of Quetzalcóatl), made up primarily of urban mestizos from México City; a tour group of North American New Agers led by a Mayan spiritualist; a group of Mexican followers of the Mexican American New Age prophet José Arguelles; and the Rainbow Family, a loose group of North American spiritualists who gather each year. When these spiritualists began celebrations and ceremonies that interfered with the official program, INAH officials and the police clashed with them. The real descendants of Chichén Itzá, the local Mayan villagers, saw (and continue to see) the whole event as nonsense.

In the Chichén Itzá arena of economic, ideological, political, and identity struggle, archaeology has played numerous roles. Mexican archaeologists have definite economic and political interests in the control of the monument and its interpretation through the INAH (see chapter 4). The interest of the international tourists originates from popular knowledge of the archaeological research done at the site, primarily by North American archaeologists. The North American and Mexican New Agers built their interpretations of spirituality in large part from the knowledge that archaeologists and anthropologists have produced of the ancient Maya. Throughout this tale, archaeologists have been intimately involved, politically interested, and broadly implicated in social relations and struggles.

Castañeda's analysis of Chichén Itzá demonstrates the complexity of the social contexts of archaeological practice. This complexity points to the importance of self-reflexivity on the part of archaeologists, that is, a self-critical examination of the political interests, ideology, and social positioning of archaeology in social contexts. Over the last two decades, substantial scholarship, public conflict, and legislation have made the

political, social, and ideological nature of archaeological practice clear (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Tilley 1989; Conkey and Gero 1991; Hamilakis 1996; Castañeda 1996, 2005; Kehoe 1998; D. Thomas 2000; Meskell 2002a; Shanks 2004; Leone 2005; Meskell and Pels 2005; Hamilakis and Duke 2007). Many authors are concerned that archaeological interpretations take on a political life of their own. I seek to build a praxis of archaeology to exercise more control over the knowledge that archaeologists create, a praxis that guides our knowledge toward human emancipation rather than alienation. I find the theoretical basis for such a praxis in a dialectical Marxism.

ARCHAEOLOGY AS POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS

In a political sense, the discipline of archaeology is at once trivial and significant. Paradoxically, the significance of archaeology for political action springs from its triviality. Archaeology by and large does not directly engage in the key political struggles of the modern world. Archaeologists do not in any noteworthy way direct armies, shape economies, write laws, or imprison or free people from bondage. Nonetheless, a handful of archaeologists have become individuals of significant political importance. In 1917, the British government appointed the archaeologist Gertrude Bell as Oriental secretary to the British High Commission in Iraq. Bell helped draw the boundaries of Iraq, and she chose the first king of the new country (Wallach 1999). From 1949 to 1952, the archaeologist Yigael Yadin served as the second chief of staff for the Israeli Defense Forces (Silberman 1993). But, in no case has an individual risen to political prominence through or because of their his or her practice of archaeology.

Archaeology has been put to overt political use. In 1914, Leonard Woolley and T. E. Lawrence provided “innocent” archaeological camouflage for a British military survey of the Turkish-controlled Sinai Peninsula (Wilson 1989:137). During World War I, Sylvanus Morley used his investigations of Mayan sites in the Yucatán as a cover to negotiate with rebel Mayan leaders for their support of U.S. interests (Castañeda 1996:118). These examples warrant mention primarily because they are exceptions in the history of our discipline. Even in these exceptional cases, however, archaeology primarily served as a stalking horse for political activities, rather than as a form of political action. It made an effective stalking horse because of its obvious triviality. Clearly archaeology is a weak instrument for overt political action, and in a sense, that should

comfort archaeologists. We do not violate the civil rights of people if we wrongly reconstruct social hierarchy in the British Bronze Age. No one starves if we underestimate the productivity of Mayan-raised field agriculture. Nonetheless, the past is a locus of political struggle, and this struggle can have significant costs and consequences (Meskell 2002a, 2005; Leone 2005). It has manifested itself at many famous archaeological sites, such as Chichén Itzá and Stonehenge.

During the 1970s, the summer solstice ceremonies of the Ancient Druid Order at Stonehenge began to take on a new significance (Chippendale 1983:253–263). The ceremonies had for decades attracted rowdy onlookers. In 1974, a pirate radio station called for a festival of “love and awareness,” and the Stonehenge Free Festival was formed. The festival grew over the next ten years and came to be a counterculture gathering for hippies, travelers, and the curious.¹ The conservative regime of Margaret Thatcher saw the travelers as a threat to social order (Chippendale 1986; Bender 1998). Eventually, government officials claimed that the festival was damaging archaeological sites around Stonehenge, and in 1985 they closed it on the solstice to all but the druids. They fortified the site with barbwire and dug a trench across the entrance road to stop travelers from driving into the site. In a conflict called the Battle of the Bean Field, the police attacked a large party of travelers trying to get to Stonehenge. In the struggle, the police destroyed or seriously damaged numerous vans, trucks, buses, and cars. Scores of people were injured. In the largest mass civil arrest in English history, the police detained five hundred people (Hetherington 2000). Conflicts between the police and travelers occurred again in 1988. All of this unrest resulted in the British courts awarding damages of twenty-three thousand (pounds) to twenty-four travelers in 1991 for assault and damage to their vehicles during the Battle of the Bean Field (Bender 1998:115). In 1994, the Tory government passed a criminal justice act that greatly restricted travelers’ mobility and rights. In 2001, British Heritage reopened Stonehenge for solstice visitation under heavily controlled conditions.

In the battle over Stonehenge, which focused on who has rights to the past, British Heritage defeated the travelers’ claim to Stonehenge as a site of counterheritage (Bender 1998). The struggle gave the Thatcher government a useful opportunity to regulate and disrupt the travelers, who live outside the tax-paying mainstream of British society. The government did not expel the Ancient Druid Order, whom they regarded as quaint eccentrics good for tourism.

Stonehenge was a locus of ideological struggle. Political struggles over the past are first and foremost ideological, especially when their political nature is hidden or obscured. The obvious triviality of archaeology for overt political action makes it a cloaked but significant weapon in struggles over the past. Jordi Estévez, a colleague of mine in archaeology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, once remarked to me that he works in an ideology factory. His point was that archaeological practice produces ideology. Therefore, the question becomes, What ideology should we manufacture? His metaphor is apt. We may direct our scholarship to produce knowledge that either reinforces or challenges the dominant ideologies of our times. As Christopher Tilley (1989) has pointed out, the products of the archaeological ideology factory have most commonly sustained, justified, and legitimated the dominant ideological values of capitalism. Archaeologists have done this by venerating stability and disparaging change, by equating social change with progress, by biologizing the social, and by rationalizing the economic.

Much of the discussion of archaeology and politics has focused on the ideological content of our interpretations of the past and archaeological practice. Scholars have deconstructed Cambridge lectures (Tilley 1989), living history museums (Leone 1981), communities (Potter 1994), gardens (Leone et al. 1987), histories (Patterson 1995b; Kehoe 1998; Estévez and Vila 1999, 2006), and cemeteries (McGuire 1988) to show how they are laden with politically significant ideologies. Too often, however, this process of deconstruction and critique provides no directions for alternative practices or, more important, no guide for a politically engaged praxis. We are left with the sure understanding that these things are political and ideological but with no clear sense of what to do about that fact. Many archaeologists, however, still wish to ignore or deny that archaeology is politics by other means.

POLITICAL DOUBTS

Overt discussions of archaeology and politics make many Anglo archaeologists uneasy and uncomfortable, especially in the United States (Ford 1973; Clark 1996). I concur with Lynn Meskell that “archaeologists have traditionally operated on the assumption that they are not implicated in the representation and struggles of living peoples and that all such political engagement is negatively charged” (2005:123). Alice Kehoe notes, “Archaeologists *chose* to disengage from politics, money-grubbing, socialite smoozing: out there in the desert or jungle or corn-

field, they could epitomize the dedicated selfless seeker after objective knowledge” (1998:86). This unease and disengagement occur for both good and bad reasons, but denying the political nature of archaeology is not realistic. Furthermore, denying, ignoring, or discounting the political nature of archaeology presents real dangers. It leaves archaeologists with no say or role in the political life of the knowledge that we create.

In part, this disdain for politics in archaeology reflects a larger disdain for politics in U.S. culture. North Americans tend to spurn politics as a dirty business tainted by dishonesty, strong feelings, and self-interest. In popular discourse, politics is contrasted with dispassionate, objective science. The dominant ideology of the United States tends to view politics as a phenomenon separable from other aspects of society, such as economics and culture. Americans in general resist “making things political.” This attitude contrasts strongly with the ideologies of European, Latin American, African, and Asian societies, which tend to see politics as an integral aspect of all social life, including archaeology (Hodder 1991; Schmidt and Patterson 1995; Politis and Alberti 1999; Fernández 2006).

Many archaeologists also resist any explicit discussions of politics, because such discussions can be emotional and acrimonious. Political positions necessarily involve moral and ethical attitudes about the world. These attitudes invoke powerful zeal in people. We are taught as young children to exclude politics from polite conversation, because politics creates tension and hostility among individuals. To engage in political discourse is to enter into an uneven and unstable terrain where you can make more enemies than friends. In the aftermath of theoretical tensions that occurred at the end of the twentieth century, many archaeologists just want to proclaim, “Why can’t we all be friends?” and get back to sorting potsherds. They want to paper over differences to avoid confronting real political issues (McNiven and Russell 2005:223–231).

Politics is fundamentally about how groups advance their interests within society. If we accept that archaeology is political, then we must ask which interests we should support and which we should oppose. But what tools do we have to make these decisions? Archaeologists fear that others will use our knowledge or practice without our consent or cooperation to advance their interests. Even worse, we fear that we will be caught between conflicting interests. Nowhere is this fear more of a reality in the United States than in negotiations mandated by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. In some contexts these negotiations have thrust archaeologists into the midst of conflicts among Indian nations. Fine-Dare (2002:131–132) discusses how

anthropologists negotiating repatriation at Fort Lewis College, in Colorado, had to resist being drawn into disputes between the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Nation.² Even while Fort Lewis anthropologists attempted to remain neutral, both Native groups interpreted their actions as supporting or not supporting one or the other nation. In the United States, discussions of repatriation have shown archaeologists that we, too, have political interests, that our practice of science is not unsullied, dispassionate (D. Thomas 2000). Archaeologists must accept that our retreat to the desert, the jungle, or the cornfield has not removed us from the taint of politics.

Politics necessarily involves passions and interests because political practice has real consequences, and they are often pernicious. People lose their land or their jobs; they starve, die, or are imprisoned. As Trigger (1989a:381) points out, the political causes that archaeologists have willingly supported have been harmful to humanity as often as helpful. We have no better example of this than the use of archaeology in the Nazi Third Reich (Arnold 1990, 2004). German prehistorians elaborated Gustav Kossinna's notion that archaeological cultures equate with ethnic groups, and they turned this into a propaganda tool for German ideas of racial superiority. German archaeologists spread across eastern Europe looking for Germanic sites that would demonstrate Aryan racial superiority and justify the expansion of the Third Reich to include all of "ancient Germany." This archaeological practice did not wage war, bomb cities, or exterminate Jews, Gypsies, communists, homosexuals, and the disabled. It did, however, contribute to the legitimization of a genocidal regime. Unfortunately, we can call up many additional examples of the use of archaeology in the service of totalitarian dictatorships (Galaty and Watkinson 2004).

In the discourse about archaeology, all totalitarian and racial concerns get neatly packed into the accusation of "political bias." A bias is a prejudice in a general or specific sense that gives a person a predilection to one particular point of view. A bias could lead a scholar to accept or reject the truth of a claim, not because of the strength of the claim itself, but because it does or does not correspond to the scholar's own preconceived ideas. When critics search Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union for examples of the dangers of such biases, they easily find them (Shnirelman 1995). In archaeology, Nikolay Marr advanced a theory that languages change not as a result of historical processes but because of social evolutionary changes in the societies of the speakers. From this premise he argued that the prehistory of Europe was a history of a single people dif-

ferentiated by their stages of evolutionary development. Under Stalin, Marr's views became official dogma, because they could be used to support Stalin's ideas of mechanistic unilineal evolution (Trigger 1989a:225; Klejn 1993:22). Soviet archaeologists could not challenge Marr's theory until Stalin finally decided to reject it in 1950.

To many archaeologists, it seems safer to remain aloof from politics and either ignore or deny the political nature of archaeology. Better yet, they advocate removal of "political bias" from our practice, thinking that this will make archaeology apolitical. They are mistaken about this strategy, however, because attacking political bias in archaeology is itself a political act. Just as the accusation of prejudice charges that the accused lacks objectivity, it implicitly claims that the accuser has objectivity. For the accuser to be unbiased, however, he or she would have to stand outside society and all its political interests and passions. This is not possible. Invocation of political bias silences the conversation that critique makes possible in praxis, a critical discussion of how knowledge is politically situated and how that situatedness affects what we can and cannot know about the social world. Unfortunately, ignoring or denying the political nature of archaeology does not make politics go away, just as accusing others of political bias does not make the accuser unbiased. More important, such self-deception can lead to the very consequences that the apolitical archaeologist fears.

A "politically unbiased" archaeology poses three dangers. These are triviality, complicity, and unexamined prejudice.

First is the danger of triviality. The most obvious form of triviality is a focus on the inconsequential details of the archaeological record. A good example of this can be seen in the development of West German archaeology after World War II. Before the war, German archaeologists had actively engaged in interpretations of prehistory, but after the war, in reaction to the insidious Nazi manipulation of prehistory, German archaeologists turned away from questions of theory and interpretation (Arnold 1990), focusing instead on the description and classification of archaeological minutiae. Entire dissertations were written on the classification and description of a style of brooch. Detailed description and classification of the archaeological record can be important and useful if it is done with specific interpretive and theoretical goals. But as the critique of science in archaeology has shown, such goals necessarily imply a political content. In the absence of such goals, archaeologists risk becoming like Chattus Calvensis II in Herman Hesse's novel *The Glass Bead Game* (1969:65). His life's work was a four-volume tome, *The Pronun-*

ciation of Latin in the Universities of Southern Italy toward the End of the Twelfth Century.

Second is the danger of complicity. Apolitical archaeologists risk involvement as accomplices in questionable acts or even crimes (Trigger 1989a:331). Archaeologists' complicity may spring from their false beliefs in objectivity combined with a failure to understand the political contexts in which they create knowledge. Susan Pollock (2003), Reinhard Bernbeck (2003b), and Yannis Hamilakis (2005) discuss how some archaeologists have become complicit in support of the current U.S. war in Iraq. Pollock (2003) notes that the April 2003 looting of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad attracted widespread media attention in the West, because Western news media has for over a hundred years treated finds in Mesopotamian archaeology as foundational to Western civilization. Archaeologists criticized the U.S. government and decried the destruction of the museum as a loss to Western civilization. The burning of the National Library, the National Archives, and the Koranic Library attracted far less attention and little or no comment from archaeologists. The books, manuscripts, and records in these collections pertain to the modern history of Iraq and its people. Even though many archaeologists were critical of the U.S. government, their comments reinforced popular Western perceptions of the Iraqi people as "others" by focusing on the destruction of ancient artifacts that the public associate with Western heritage and by ignoring the destruction of the libraries (not to mention the widespread looting of hospitals) (Bernbeck 2003b:115–116; Hamilakis 2005). By making the Iraqi people others, these archaeologists became complicit in the war, because the U.S. public will accept the destruction and slaughter of others, but not people like themselves. Pollock, Bernbeck, and Hamilakis suggest that archaeologists need to link their practice to larger social contexts in order to take a more nuanced and ethically responsible approach to the politics of the region and the media.

Third is the danger of unexamined prejudice in our knowledge creation. If archaeologists create knowledge without critically examining the political nature of that knowledge, we will naively reproduce ideologies. These ideologies may or may not be ones we agree with, and we may help or hinder human emancipation. Feminists have made this point very forcibly (Enloe 2004). As long as gender was unmarked (not explicitly considered) in social science research, women were invisible, because social agents were assumed to be male. Feminist scholars have shown how a failure to consider gender led archaeologists to attribute all major social transformations, from the origins of humanness to the rise of the

state, to the actions of men; women were little more than passive bystanders (Gilchrist 1999; Sanahuja 2002). Feminists have gendered the study of such transformations, leading to new understandings of how women and men made the past (Nelson 2004). They achieved this knowledge production not by removing “bias” but, rather, by explicitly examining the gender politics of archaeological interpretation. They created new knowledge by applying gendered assumptions about the social world to the archaeological record.

Archaeologists have good reason to be wary of mixing politics with their discipline. One can easily find examples of archaeological knowledge that was fabricated to fulfill a political agenda or interpretations that were predetermined by the prejudice of the researcher. The idea, however, that we can straightforwardly eliminate political bias or just ignore the political content of our knowledge production is facile. Archaeologists make knowledge in social and political contexts, and our knowledge will always be in some part a product of that context (Tilley 1989; Conkey and Gero 1991; McGuire 1992b; Watkins 2000; Shanks 2004; Leone 2005; Fernández 2006). Once scholars recognize that the production of archaeological knowledge has political implications, some archaeologists need to develop an explicit, comprehensive praxis of knowledge creation, critique, and action to transform the world.

In an earlier book titled *A Marxist Archaeology*, I stated, “The notion that archaeology can change the world, that it can alter capitalism, or in any serious way challenge it is simply absurd” (McGuire 1992b:xv). I still believe this. Individuals who primarily seek a life on the barricades will not find it in archaeology. The vast majority of archaeological practice has been and should remain concerned with the acquisition and critique of archaeological knowledge. Archaeology is a weak weapon for political action, because it cannot be wielded directly in the struggles over land, life, liberty, and wealth that drive the political process. Archaeology, however, can be a powerful weapon in ideological struggles that have real consequences for people.

SECRET WRITING AND THE FOLLIES OF UNBIASED ARCHAEOLOGY

The greatest danger of a politically unbiased archaeology lies in what Ben Agger (2004:49–55) has called the “secret writing” of fast capitalism. Secret writing flows from the pens of “objective” social scientists and culture industry pundits who produce texts, cultural artifacts, and meanings

that appear natural, given, and unalterable. These writings are secret in the sense that their creators hide or obscure their authorship and agendas and the politics with which they imbue the writings. By pretending objectivity, science becomes even more partisan, because the scholar denies the political nature of research. The culture industry commodifies culture, and thus culture is shaped by the people who stand to reap profits from it (Agger 2004:55). Yet the presentation of culture is designed to deny the authorship of these entrepreneurs. People consume culture as leisure and entertainment. To be marketable, culture must be made comfortable, unthreatening, and entertaining. Commodified culture sells a natural, given, and unalterable reality. In both nationalism and heritage tourism, secret writing creates mythic histories. In these uses of heritage, “unbiased” archaeology and “objective” science have, in fact, constituted political actions often dominating, alienating, and otherwise harming people.

Archaeology as the Secret Writing of Nationalism

The critique of archaeology as a political tool has often focused on how nationalist movements have used and manipulated it to create nationalisms. When Trigger (1989a, 2006) and others (Ford 1973; Meskell and Preucel 2004) bemoan the pernicious consequences of archaeology as political action, they usually have nationalism in mind. Sian Jones (1997:11) goes further, claiming that nationalist discourse permeates archaeology at all levels of practice. The literature on archaeology and nationalism is massive (Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell, ed. 1998; Kane 2003; Galaty and Watkinson 2004). In their brief review of politics and archaeology, Lynn Meskell and Robert Preucel (2004:318–319) cite over seventy works by archaeologists that discuss nationalism. Virtually all of these works criticize the use of archaeology in nationalism. Most Western archaeologists would probably agree with Yannis Hamilakis’s observation that “a critical archaeology should deconstruct and effectively oppose nationalist narratives of the past and the present, as hegemonic discourses” (1996:977). I will not attempt a comprehensive review of this literature, but I will use observations and examples from it to point out the folly and danger of nationalism as political action through archaeology.

Despite an immense literature critiquing nationalist archaeologies, I know of no how-to book for doing a nationalist archaeology. Such a work could not exist, because it would expose the secret of the writing. The power of archaeology in nationalist struggles springs from the fic-

tion that archaeology is an objective science and from the obfuscation of the political endeavor. Nationalists muster archaeology both to prove their myths dispassionately and to reveal and reconstruct an “authentic” objectified heritage.

Over the last hundred years, nationalism has been the source of great human suffering (Anderson 1983; Harris 1990; Smith 1991; Poole 1999; Grosby 2005; Kampschror 2007). Nationalism is a flawed project. The notion that every nation should have its own state or that every state should be a single nation does not have much value as either a normative or a realistic goal (Dunn 1994:3). Nationalists’ projects use archaeology to reinforce and validate mythic histories. In the struggle of nationalistic movements, archaeology may be wielded to confront inequities, but with the success of such movements nationalist archaeologies inevitably become embedded in the status quo (Thomas 2004:108–116).

The ideology of the nation-state is grounded in an essentialist notion of a people (a nation) who share a common language and culture, heritage, and territory, which define the nation (Hamilakis 1996:977; Thomas 2004:109–110). Nationalism often rests on the idea of a golden age of ethnic and linguistic uniformity and promotes a culture that is supposedly still connected to that past. In reality, however, national identity is created, contested, and unstable (Poole 1999:67–82). Sharing a common history does not mean that people have shared a common experience of that history (McNiven and Russell 2005:211–231). The struggle over heritage among groups with different experiences of history both flows from and contributes to the instability and conflict of national identity (Kampschror 2007).

Nationalist movements pick and choose from the events of history to create a heritage (Lowenthal 1985:37). Poole (1999:17) notes that every nation has its own history of triumphs and tragedies, victories and defeats, but these events are never the sum total of all that the people of the nation have experienced. The chosen events are usually tied to the territory of the nation. National heritages typically favor those events that relate to how the people of the nation acquired their rightful territory or how they defended it from usurpers. National heritages also tend to glorify the death and suffering of the heroes of the nation; they favor martyrs rather than conquerors. Those who have suffered and sacrificed their lives for the nation demonstrate that the worth of the nation transcends other values.

In 1999, Catalán friends in Barcelona took me to the Gothic basilica of Santa María del Mar. Adjacent to the church is a memorial to the martyrs of the siege of Barcelona in 1714. During the War of the Spanish

Succession (1701–1714), Barcelona sided with the Austrians and English against the Spanish and French. Armies supporting the Bourbon Spanish king Felipe V attacked Barcelona in 1713. The city fell eighteen months later, after a horrific siege. Felipe ordered the construction of two fortresses to dominate the city, stripped the Catalán people of sovereignty, and outlawed the Catalán language. The Spanish took the leaders of the Catalán resistance to a plaza adjacent to the basilica and shot them dead. Over two hundred years later, at the end of the Spanish Civil War, Franco conquered Barcelona, executed his opponents against the walls of the city, and suppressed Catalán sovereignty, language, and identity. Barcelona regained partial sovereignty and cultural freedom following Franco's death in 1975. The Catalan government then constructed the monument and inscribed it in Catalán to honor the martyrs of 1714.

On our way to Santa María del Mar, we walked past the main cathedral of the city. Here, on the west side of the cathedral, we passed a memorial erected in the nineteenth century to a different martyrdom. On a wall behind a fountain, tiles hand painted with Castilian text and drawings told the story of two residents of Barcelona who opposed the French during Napoleon's invasion of Spain (1808–1813). The French garroted the two, making them martyrs in the Spanish War of Independence. When I asked one of my Catalán friends about this memorial, he avowed no knowledge of the events, dismissing it with a wave of his hand as Spanish.

One problem that nationalist movements encounter in creating national histories and heritages is that the past is already taken (Bernbeck and Pollock 1996:140). One group's defeat is another's victory. As the two memorials in Barcelona show, the same territory includes events significant to different groups and nationalisms. In a discussion of U.S. nationalism and archaeology, Frank McManaman (2000) distinguishes between a civic nationalism available to all through citizenship and competing ethnic nationalisms claimed by specific groups such as Native Americans and African Americans but closed to others. In the end, he dismisses Native Americans' nationalist claims to an ancient U.S. past. He concludes, "There is no inherent barrier to modern Americans, no matter what their ethnic backgrounds, embracing ancient American history as their own" (McManaman 2000:133). Thus, a national heritage can have only one past and one history that define the essence of the nation. In picking and choosing between events, the silences, the events not chosen, are as significant as the ones trumpeted in the national history. These pasts remain outside the national heritage both as a challenge to it and as building blocks for conflicting ethnic nationalisms.

National heritages are built on mythical concepts of history in which little or no separation exists between the past and the present (Bernbeck and Pollock 1996:140). They move events, identities, and nation-states forward and backward in time in order to serve the interests of groups in the present. Only by ignoring this conflation of chronometric time with mythic time can secret writing remain undisclosed.

In Israel, the secular Zionists of the early twentieth century embraced the 74 C.E. Roman siege of Masada as a powerful symbol for their nationalist movement (Yadin 1966; Silberman 1993:271–273). Yigael Yadin (1966), archaeologist and retired chief of staff for the Israeli Defense Forces, mounted a massive excavation at Masada in 1963 to prove a nationalist myth of heroic resistance fighters choosing death rather than surrender (Ben-Yehuda 2002). The Zionists used the defense of Masada against ancient Romans to bolster the defense of the modern nation-state of Israel against Arabs and projected their nation-state back in time to connect it to the last semisovereign Jewish kingdom destroyed by the Romans in 74 C.E.

In May 1921, Great Britain ended the Irish-Anglo War by partitioning six of the nine counties of Ulster to form Northern Ireland. The rest of the island would become the Irish Republic (Bardon 1992). The partition boundary corresponded roughly to Black Pig's Dyke (Delle 1994). Built in the first century of the common era, Black Pig's Dyke is a discontinuous system of defensive linear earthworks and ditches that stretch from County Armagh to Donegal Bay. Similar linear earthworks with accompanying ditches exist throughout Ireland and probably represent Iron Age territorial boundaries. Unionists who wished for Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom projected the partition boundary of 1921 back in time onto Black Pig's Dyke. They claim that it was a formidable barrier that had separated northern Ireland from the rest of the island and that, for this reason, the region had always been more closely connected by sea to Scotland than by land to the Irish Republic (Bardon 1992; Delle 1994).

National heritage is objectified in historic objects, structures, and places, such as Masada and Black Pig's Dyke. These things give the sense of reality to the past and become powerful, emotive symbols of nationalism. Their materiality creates an appearance of a known given past, even though their interpretation remains constantly malleable as secret writing. They offer the national history a tangible and material appearance of authenticity, because the history becomes confused with the thing. Archaeology's power in nationalism springs from the materiality of the

historic objects, structures, and places that objectify nationalism. The archaeologist's ability to date events, reconstruct buildings, trade networks, production techniques, and activities seems to confirm an accurate national history. Archaeology's triviality in relation to practical political action diverts suspicion from the secret political nature of such findings. The pockmarked wall of the basilica Santa María del Mar verifies the execution of the Barcelona martyrs of 1714. The archaeologists' excavation of the Roman camps and works at Masada confirm the reality of the 74 C.E. siege. When archaeologists plot and map Black Pig's Dyke, its course parallel to the 1921 partition line becomes obvious. Scholars' ability to accurately locate these places and things adds credence to other aspects of the nationalist story and the struggle.

Struggles over heritage focus on the objects, structures, and places that symbolize it (Golden 2004). During the American Revolution, battalions of the Continental army invaded upstate New York to destroy the Iroquois Confederacy. The soldiers burned fields and villages and chopped down orchards to drive the Indians out. They also pulled down the wooden markers in the cemeteries and obliterated petroglyphs at Picture Rocks, Pennsylvania (Wilkinson 1992). Following the Greek War of Independence (1821–1831), the new Greek state cleansed the Athenian Acropolis of an Armenian cemetery, Muslim buildings, and medieval structures, just as the revolution had cleansed the Greek countryside of Muslims (Hamilakis 2003:64–69). In 1993, Croat forces shelled and destroyed the baroque Ottoman bridge in Mostar as part of their attempt to cleanse Bosnia and Herzegovina of Muslims (Yarwood 1999). All of these examples of nationalist archaeologies show that the symbolic is not something apart from real politics but, rather, is real politics expressed in powerful and consequential ways.

The most compelling example of such power lies in the conflicts over the Babri Mosque in Ajodhya, India (Bernbeck and Pollock 1996; Ratnagar 2004; Romey 2004). At the Babri Mosque, the ideological struggle has generated archaeological debates over the authenticity of materiality. Hindu nationalists have marshaled seemingly inconsequential debates over stratigraphy, column bases, and the context of artifacts to raise passions and inflame nationalistic sentiments (Mandal 1993; Romey 2004:50). Here the triviality of archaeology has become consequential in horrifying ways.

This conflict over heritage has directly resulted in the deaths of thousands of people. In December 1992, a mob led by members of a radical Hindu nationalist political party tore down fences surrounding the Babri

Mosque and razed the structure. They claimed that when the first Mogul emperor, Babur, built the mosque in 1528 he razed a temple marking the birthplace of the Hindu god Rama. They destroyed the mosque to rebuild the temple to Rama and to right a wrong done over four centuries ago. Rioting in India and Bangladesh followed, and over three thousand people died. In February 2002, Muslims in the city of Gujarat attacked a trainload of pilgrims returning from erecting a Hindu altar in the ruins of the mosque. Fifty-eight people died in the attack. In retaliation, Hindu mobs attacked Muslim neighborhoods in that city, and over nine hundred people died. On July 7, 2005, six armed Muslim men attacked the Hindu altar in the ruins of the old mosque, but police killed them in a gun battle. Violent reactions to these events continue to rage as I write these words.

These violent events were preceded and followed by archaeology. In 1990, B. B. Lal, the former director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), published a report on his late 1970s excavations adjacent to the Babri Mosque in a Hindu nationalist publication (Romey 2004:50). He reported that he had found a series of brick pillar bases and that stone pillars in the mosque may have originated from a temple to Rama. Following the destruction of the mosque, D. Mandal (1993) published a book disputing Lal's claims. Mandal argued that the pillar bases were too insubstantial to support large stone columns and that they occurred in different stratigraphic layers and thus could not be from the same building. In 2002, in a civil suit over the mosque site, the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court ordered a ground-penetrating radar survey to look for remains of a Hindu temple. On the basis of the results of this survey, the court ordered archaeological excavations at the site starting in March 2003. The excavators worked under difficult and rushed conditions, producing a final report by August of that year. The court ordered the two-volume descriptive report of the excavations sealed, releasing only a summary final report. This report indicated the discovery of a large building under the mosque, and nationalists leaped on this finding as evidence for the temple of Rama. Other critics found the results far more ambiguous and argued that the large structure may be an earlier mosque. They also called into question the objectivity of the ASI and alleged that the organization had sold out to the nationalists.

Bernbeck and Pollock (1996) see the controversies over the Babri Mosque as a cautionary tale for a politically active archaeology. They warn that archaeologists cannot indiscriminately support the claims of subordinate groups. Instead, archaeologists must be critical of all identi-

ties and histories and should demonstrate the fluidity and dynamism of identities in the past. Bernbeck and Pollock want archaeologists to challenge the essentialism of nationalism and expose the secret writings.

Yet even as archaeologists are coming to grips with the discipline's involvement with nationalism, heritage and the uses of the past in a global economy are changing. The terrain of nationalism has become much more rugged. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has resulted in a plethora of nationalist archaeological projects in central Eurasia (Chernykh 1995; Kohl and Tsetschladze 1995; Kamp-schror 2007). The reinvention of Europe as a confederation of states under the umbrella of the European Union has fanned the flames of suppressed nationalisms, such as Catalán. To establish its own ancient precedent, the European Union has allocated significant monies to the archaeological study of the Celts (Arnold 2004:208; Levy 2006:144–145). Thus, in contemporary Europe, archaeology serves four overlapping and often contradictory nationalist agendas: those of the existing nation-states, those of emerging nation-states, those of suppressed ethnic nationalisms, and those of a unifying Europe. Perhaps more important, the role of heritage and the past has shifted on the global stage. The commodification of the past in heritage tourism has converted patriotic shrines into theme parks (Silberman 1995:258–261) and has involved archaeologists in new secret writings.

Archaeology and the Secret Writing of the Culture Industry

Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram argue that, “at the start of the twenty-first century, nationalism is not the only political force impinging on archaeology, and it may not be the most significant” (2004:3). They identify globalization and the marketing of the past for consumption as the new political forces impinging on archaeology. Following Marcuse (1955), Agger (2004:39) notes that because fast capitalism in core states has fulfilled people's basic needs, capitalists can increase profits only by creating fresh needs through the culture industry. Fast production and the movement of production overseas create leisure time, and leisure time creates a need for entertainment. People must spend their leisure time consuming (being entertained) to keep profits flowing. In this context, heritage remains the mobilization of the past in service of the present, but it takes on a new significance (Hall and Bombardella 2005:6). Globalized fast capitalism transforms the unique heritage of nations into a universal commodity for sale in heritage tourism (Rowan and Baram 2004:6).

Secret writing appears both in the marketing of this heritage and in the ways capitalists make heritage accessible and entertaining for tourists.

This commodification is obvious in theme parks and destination resorts. The quintessential theme park is Disneyland. The tourist comes into Disneyland through a portal on the past, Main Street. Main Street is an idealized reproduction of the heart of a turn-of-the-nineteenth-century, small, midwestern American town (Wallace 1996). Walt Disney had the street built at five-eighths of actual size. He “improved” the past by decreeing that everything on the street would remain fresh and new and that all its elements would function together in harmony and unison. Tourists enter a safe, gated space and experience a hyperreal past that is comfortable and unthreatening. The historian Mike Wallace (1996:136) noted, “It is like playing in a walk-in doll’s house that is simultaneously a shopper’s paradise, equipped with dozens of little old-time shops with corporate logos tastefully affixed.”

The use of the past as nostalgia and exotica to lure the consumer to spend is not limited to theme parks like Disneyland. In Las Vegas, the gambling tourist can visit ancient Egypt, ancient Rome, medieval England, and Renaissance Venice. In South Africa, destination resorts with casinos have tried to enhance Africa as an exotic destination through new architecture and design (Hall and Bombardella 2005:10). The tourist can experience the grandeurs of the Dutch East India Company in Johannesburg and a full-scale Tuscan town on the highveld, all improved like Main Street (but without the dancing cartoon characters). These obviously commercial manipulations of heritage invoke authenticity, but they do not claim to be authentic. “The visitor is a knowing participant in the illusion” (Hall and Bombardella 2005:22).

The commercial commodification of the past is not new. Walt Disney built Main Street in 1954. But as the twentieth century drew to a close, objectified heritage became increasingly commodified, and patriotic parks became theme parks. In the current triumph of the logic of commodification, fast capitalist market forces apparently can convert almost every use value to exchange value. Archaeologists see this process in the marketing of heritage. Some, such as Mexican archaeologist José Luis Lorenzo (1998:157), have declared tourism a menace to the preservation of archaeological heritage. The use value of heritage is to define a group of people or a nation that shares a history. The rise of the heritage industry has converted that use value to an exchange value by transforming nostalgia for the past into a commodity to be sold (Shanks 2001). In Manchester, England, yuppies buy lofts built in restored historic industrial

buildings, with a Starbucks on the first floor; thousands of miles away in Denver, Colorado, yuppies buy lofts in restored historic industrial buildings with a Starbucks on the first floor (Rowan and Baram 2004).

In the 1980s, Great Britain suffered an extreme economic decline as its industries collapsed under foreign competition, and ships carried South African coal to Newcastle. This period of economic decline saw the growth of a heritage industry in Great Britain (Hewison 1987). This industry created a past in which the British could find a refuge from the realities of economic decline and in which tourists, primarily from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, could encounter a heritage. Consumers purchased nostalgia and roots along with their hotel rooms, meals, tours, and souvenir coffee mugs. The flagship of this industry has been the Jorvik Viking Center, in York, a commercial enterprise that uses information from archaeological excavations to construct a Disney-like ride under the city of York, into the Viking past (Merriman 1988). Here, authenticity matters, because tourists come to experience a trip into the past, not an illusion. Nonetheless, this authenticity has had to be packaged, refined, molded, and marketed in order to be consumed as experience in the ride and to be sold as trinkets in the shop at the end of the ride. It is not “improved” quite like Main Street, but the writing that has created the cultural object for sale has remained secret.

Global fast capitalism has created heritage tourism as a major industry of worldwide scope. The wealthy and even the well-off of North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia, all core capitalist societies, can travel to heritage sites anywhere in the world (Rowan and Baram 2004:6). They go to these places as themselves, demanding security, ease of travel, and comforts when they arrive. They seek the exotic, but they want a comfortable exotic that is not threatening or unpleasant. They are, after all, on vacation. Alejandro González Iñárritu’s 2006 movie *Babel* effectively captures the contradictions inherent in a comfortable exotic. In the movie, Western tourists are enjoying a tour of Morocco. After a boy accidentally shoots an American woman on the tour, their bus is diverted from the tourist path into a local village, where the exotic quickly turns threatening, and the comforts of the West disappear. The tourists’ experience becomes one of alienation and fear.

Many countries in the Third World have found it profitable to turn their patrimony, such as Chichén Itzá, into theme parks (Kohl 2004). To do so, however, they have to create a social, infrastructural, and economic bubble to protect the heritage tourists from the threatening and unpleasant realities of poverty, exploitation, violence, and rebellion that

exist in and around the heritage sites. Such bubbles are expensive. Most often their creators are multinational resort companies that reap massive profits from the heritage industry (Meskell 2003:162). Most of these profits leave the country and go into the pockets of investors in the capitalist core. The local people, who may be the descendants of the site builders, reap little economic gain from their ancestors' monuments. Heritage sites thus become loci of political struggle that involves archaeologists and sometimes has pernicious consequences for the interest groups involved (Castañeda 1996, 2005; Joyce 2003, 2005; Ardren 2004; Meskell 2005).

In 1988, the National Geographic Society proposed the creation of the Ruta Maya (the Mayan Route) to a group of five Central American nations in order to define a tourist itinerary linking the major Mayan sites of the region (Joyce 2003:82). These five nations, México, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, formed a marketing confederation called the Mundo Maya (the Mayan World) to promote tourism along this route. To create the Ruta Maya, the National Geographic Society used an archaeological narrative, which treats the Maya as a phenomenon that transcends the borders of the five nations (Joyce 2003:82–85). It thus defines the Maya as an international cultural heritage not owned by any of the participant states that make up the Mundo Maya. These states apparently saw the increased income from tourism as more important than the nationalist narratives that made Mayan sites the objectified heritage of individual nations.

The secret writings of the Mundo Maya largely exclude the indigenous Maya of the region from the interpretation, management, and economic benefits of the Ruta Maya (Ardren 2004:107). Advertising for the route prominently displays indigenous Maya in native costume as timeless inhabitants of the ruins. The marketing equates the Maya with nature and includes images that highlight exotic, eroticized Mayan women posed among equally exotic ruins (Joyce 2003; Ardren 2004), recreating the Mayan monuments to satisfy the heritage tourist's desire for escapism and entertainment. Although the marketing of the Ruta Maya commodifies the indigenous Maya, these people receive little direct benefit from the tourism. The occupation of the site of Chichén Itzá by Mayan people is not an isolated example of contested space and indigenous struggles for economic gain, heritage, and identity along the Ruta Maya (Castañeda 1996, 2005). In 1998, two thousand to three thousand Chorti Maya occupied the archaeological park at Copán, in Honduras (Joyce 2003:92–93; 2005:260). For two weeks they brought tourism to

a halt to advance their demands for land claims and indigenous rights. In both these cases, Mayan Indians contested the expropriation of their culture, heritage, and identity by reclaiming that heritage to try to advance their contemporary interests

Cultural heritage has been the focus of similar but even more violent political confrontations in Egypt (Meskell 2003, 2005). Western scholars in Egypt have a long history of seeing the Egyptian people as divorced from their pharaonic past and as active impediments to archaeological research (Meskell 2003). Since the eighteenth century, Egyptian villagers have confronted archaeologists as foreign intruders who have treated them as beasts of labor. Repeatedly, Western archaeologists or the Egyptian state has expelled villagers from their homes in the precincts of ancient ruins. The village of Gurna, in the ancient site of the Valley of the Nobles, near Luxor, has been a locus of such evictions. The shantytown of Gurna was unsightly and odorous and distracted the tourist's gaze from the splendors of ancient monuments. Attempts at forced relocation of the villagers have had limited success. In one attempt, police killed four people and injured twenty-five others (Meskell 2005:134). Tourist development in the area has focused on separating the local people from the tourists by using walls, aerial walkways, and gated tourist centers. The tourism industry has also constructed themed restaurants and faux Egyptian villages (Meskell 2003:163-164; 2005:140-144). Like the theme casinos of Las Vegas and South Africa, an improved version of Egypt allows tourists to visit without encountering the realities of poverty, unsanitary conditions, and exploitation that are typical of the real rural Egypt. In November 1997, Muslim extremists attacked tourists at the Temple of Hatshepsut, near Gurna, killing fifty-eight foreigners and four Egyptians (Meskell 2005:136-138). The terrorists identified heritage tourism as an attack on Islamic culture. They struck out at the most visible evidence of Western domination, the opulent bubble of tourism juxtaposed with the poverty and misery of communities like Gurna.

Some archaeologists have sought to subvert the culture industry and to burst the tourist bubble. Many have critiqued the experience of heritage tourism (Castañeda 1996, 2005; Joyce 2003, 2005; Meskell 2003, 2005; Ardren 2004; Rowan and Baram 2004; Duke 2007). A few others have sought to create cultural tourism that does not alienate local communities from their own heritage, economic benefits, or the visitors. This involves creating a heritage experience outside the tourist bubble. One of the best examples of heritage tourism that confronts alienation is on the Ruta Maya, at the site of El Pilar, in Belize.

Anabel Ford and her colleagues have sought to make El Pilar a place that promotes archaeological conservation, sustainable agriculture, and heritage tourism (BRASS El Pilar Project 2006). El Pilar project has worked with the local inhabitants and the government of Belize to design and manage El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna. Key to the program is a community organization called Los Amigos de El Pilar. The project has worked with Los Amigos de El Pilar to develop gardens in the forest and to stop clear-cutting of forests for cattle grazing. The park has become a center for eco-tourism that links the tourist experience to the archaeology, the environment, and the local community. Community members run the Masewal Forest Trail, which introduces visitors to the gardens, local plants and Mayan lore. The community has also set up a café for visitors in the Be Pukte Community Center. El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna bursts the tourist bubble to serve multiple interests and produce local benefits.

In many places around the modern world, certain social groups have used archaeology to advance their political interests, which has had real and significant consequences for the people in those societies: loss of land and jobs, starvation, death, and imprisonment. The seeming triviality of archaeology for political action has made it an effective pen for secret writings about nationalism and commodified heritage. Building an emancipatory archaeology is possible if we recognize the political nature of archaeology and eschew secret writings.

EMANCIPATORY ARCHAEOLOGY

Secret writing supports the powerful and the status quo. Positions that confront power and challenge the status quo must read secret writings aloud in order to question what they have made unalterable, given, and natural. Emancipatory praxis in archaeology seeks to recover memory and to confront the powerful with nonmythic histories of events placed firmly in time and space. Such histories reveal injustice rather than mythologizing or hiding it. The excavations of mass graves of the Spanish Civil War by Foro por la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica are one example of such efforts (Gassiot 2005). Forensic archaeologists have also excavated mass graves to reveal the violation of human rights in many other countries, including Argentina (EAAF 2005), Bosnia (Stover 1998), and Mongolia (Frohlich and Hunt 2006). Archaeologists have excavated fascism's chambers of horrors to expose the secret writings of torture on human bodies at the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin,

Germany, and at the Clandestine Center of Detention and Torture (aka Club Atlético) in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Berlin Wall, built by the East Germans in 1961, ran through the heart of the city, a few yards away from the headquarters of the Nazi secret police, the Gestapo, at Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse 8. The basement of this building contained an infamous jail and torture center. During World War II, the Allies bombed the building to ruins, and by the mid-1950s, the City of West Berlin had leveled the remains. In 1985, a citizen's group called the Active Museum of Fascism and Resistance issued an appeal: "Let's dig. . . . Let no grass grow over it" (Meyer 1992:28). The group began an archaeological excavation to draw attention to the Nazi past and to recover the memory of the crimes of fascism in time for the celebration of Berlin's 750-year anniversary, in 1987. Many in Berlin and in Germany opposed the excavations, because they did not want this past memorialized or even revealed. Despite much opposition, the Active Museum of Fascism and Resistance continued its illicit excavation. By 1987, the group had uncovered the basement of the building with its cells and torture chambers. It then erected a temporary museum on the site, called Topography of Terror (Rürup 2002). The museum in the excavated basement consisted of interpretive panels that told the history of Nazi atrocities at the site. The panels listed the names of people whom the Nazis had tortured and killed there. In the museum's first year, over three hundred thousand people visited this impromptu exhibition.

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the automaker Daimler-Benz proposed expanding its headquarters building over the site. Public support for the museum, however, grew. In 1992, the government of Berlin incorporated the Foundation Topography of Terror to build and administer a permanent museum at the site (Rürup 2002). This foundation, which included a number of communities, schools and churches, political parties, trade unions, citizens' groups, and history workshops, set up the Memorial Museum Department, which works with other groups and institutions seeking to recover the memory of Nazi atrocities throughout the German Republic. The foundation has conducted digs to uncover, preserve, and interpret other key Nazi buildings adjacent the Gestapo headquarters and the remains of bunkers and air defense trenches. Today the open-air museum in the excavated basement of the Gestapo headquarters is a popular tourist destination (Foundation Topography of Terror 2002).

Archaeologists in Buenos Aires, have undertaken a project similar to that in Berlin. A right-wing military dictatorship ruled Argentina from

1976 to 1983 (Weissel 2003:29–30; Acuto 2003). The dictatorship pursued the “Dirty War” to wipe out any and all left-wing opposition. Government agents took around thirty thousand people, known as *desaparecidos* (disappeared ones), to clandestine detention centers, where the military questioned, tortured, and killed most of them. The government released some individuals after torture, but its agents threw most from planes far out over the Atlantic Ocean or buried them in secret graves. The military opened the Clandestine Center of Detention and Torture, euphemistically referred to as the Club Atlético, in 1977. The center continued in operation in the basement of an old warehouse until 1980, when the building was leveled for freeway construction. The military government imprisoned and tortured about eighteen hundred people at the Club Atlético alone (Weissel 2003:29).

In the early 1990s, a survivor of the Club Atlético recognized the spot under the elevated freeway where the torture center had stood, and survivors and human rights organizations began to agitate for the excavation of the basement, to air the horrors that had occurred there. One of the survivors stated the goal of the project: “to recover what could have been forgotten, so memory is not lost and thus we can claim justice” (Acuto 2003:3). In 2002, survivors, relatives of the *desaparecidos*, human rights organizations, and the City of Buenos Aires began excavations in the basement (Weissel 2003:30). These groups set the agenda of the project and employed archaeologists as collaborators in the effort. The archaeological research focused on recovering artifacts and inferring the formation processes of the cellar so that the activities of the Club Atlético could be reconstructed (Weissel 2003:30). The materiality of the torture center, combined with the testimony of those who survived torment there, has made for a powerful public statement about the excesses of the military government. Archaeologists have undertaken similar excavations at other torture centers in the province of Buenos Aires, the city of Rosario, and the state of Tucumán. In Argentina and the rest of the world, the memory of the horrors of totalitarian dictatorship must be sustained so that such atrocities can never happen again (Weissel 2003:30).

Clearly, when archaeologists seek to make political action part of their practice, they step onto a very difficult topography. The history of nationalist uses of archaeology is at best checkered and at worst monstrous. The archaeology done in the service of commodified heritage for tourists has seldom been any better. Most Western archaeologists would probably agree with Trigger’s stinging condemnation (2006:486) of indi-

viduals who deliberately invent or misrepresent archaeological knowledge for political purposes and his insistence that they should be decertified by the profession and criminally prosecuted if their actions help to bring harm to people. But political archaeologies have also been emancipatory. The excavation of mass graves from the Spanish Civil War, the Bosnian War, and the Dirty War of Argentina and of torture rooms in the Gestapo headquarters and the Club Atlético has recovered the memories of injustices and violations of human rights. Such recovered memories have helped bring justice and closure to those who suffered as well as to their families.

Scholars cannot resolve the dilemma of politics and archaeology by invoking a sterile vision of archaeology as either science or politics. Two decades of debate have shown us that archaeology is both science and politics. The productive question is not, How do we make archaeology one or the other? but, instead, How do archaeologists link science and politics in our practice?

An honest, emancipatory political archaeology challenges the secret writings that hide and justify injustice. Such archaeology is truthful about its political content and confronts power and oppression. Neil Faulkner (2000) and Yvonne Marshall (2002, 2004) have proposed that intellectuals can build an honest, emancipatory scholarship with a community archaeology that is politically self-conscious and collaborative with local groups of people. A candid, liberating archaeology has the potential to develop a heritage tourism that benefits and advances the interests of local peoples rather than the profits of multinational corporations (Ardren 2004; Marshall 2002:214–215; Moser et al. 2002; Sen 2002; Isaacson and Ford 2005:362). Such an archaeology disassembles secret writing's myth of a single, common, national heritage. It reveals the pieces that are hidden in this story to create a reflexive heritage that recognizes how social groups have differentially experienced a shared past and the consequences of that difference (Scham and Yahya 2003). It reveals how racial groups have experienced oppression and exploitation in shared pasts. It helps their descendants reclaim their dignity, legacy, and rights (Deloria 1993; La Roche and Blakey 1997; D. Thomas 2000; Watkins 2000; McDavid 2002; Blakey 2003; Leone 2005; McNiven and Russell 2005; Wiseman 2005). It transcends bourgeois interests to include working-class communities (Gero 1989; Patterson 1995b, 1997; Saitta 2005, 2007). A liberating archaeology transcends androcentric bias both in the interpretation of the past and in the practice of archaeology in the present (Gero 1983, 1985; Conkey and Williams 1991;

Gilchrist 1999; Dowson 2000; Joyce 2004; Nelson 2004). In response to imperialism and global fast capitalism, emancipatory scholarship asks how we can build an archaeology that includes the colonized (Schmidt and Patterson 1995; Scham 2001; Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002; Given 2004; Schmidt 2005). The key to an honest, emancipatory political archaeology is praxis.

Marxist archaeologists are not the only archaeologists who have advocated a socially responsible scholarship that confronts inequality and oppression in the world (Fernández 2006). Processualists, feminists, post-processualists, indigenous archaeologists, and others have attempted to build archaeologies of political action. The theory that I use here is not the only starting point for a politically engaged archaeology. It is, however, the starting point for the praxis of archaeology that I develop in this book.

A MARXIST THEORY OF PRAXIS FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

Marxism differs from much other social theory because it has an explicit political intent. Marxism is first and foremost a critical study of capitalism that seeks to transform the social world. Modern Western Marxists recognize that exploitation, inequality, and oppression exist in capitalist social relations of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. They use class as their entry point into an analysis that examines the intersection of these social relations, each with the others and with class (Sherman 1995:119; Wurst 2006). The alternative that these Marxists offer for capitalism is social democracy.

The relational dialectical method that I have adopted here is but one contemporary Marxist approach in archaeology. Archaeologists have also embraced classical Marxism and critical theory. These approaches share the ultimate goal of transforming capitalism but differ in the importance they give to knowing the world and taking action in the world. In chapter 2, I will compare how these approaches and non-Marxist approaches address praxis. Archaeologists who embrace classical Marxism also advocate a dialectical method, but it is a dialectics of nature rather than a Hegelian, or relational, dialectic. My discussion of the dialectic that follows in this chapter will elucidate the differences between these two dialectics.

Frederic Jameson (1997:175) defines Marxism as the science of capitalism or, more properly, as the science of the inherent contradictions of capitalism. This science begins with Karl Marx's radicalization of Enlightenment rationality into a critique of capitalism (Patterson

2003:7–32). Marx read history in class terms. That is, he looked at history in terms of social groups that have material interests. For Marx, the key to understanding that history lies in the struggle of these groups to create, maintain, or transform social relationships that advance those material interests. Social groups can act to advance their interests only if their members possess a shared consciousness—class consciousness—that encompasses their identity and interests. The Marxist study of the past seeks to reveal hidden social relations and to take up the perspective of the oppressed and dominated. Patterson (2003:8) has compared this process to peeling an onion: the scholar removes layer after layer to reveal its innermost structure and then reassembles the whole.

Praxis

Conscious, knowing human actors may seek the transformation of capitalism through a radical praxis (McGuire et al. 2005). Praxis springs from the realizations that people make the social world in their everyday lives and that they can also subvert and transform that world. A Marxist radical praxis necessarily involves three goals: to know the world, to critique the world, and to take action in the world. Without a praxis that integrates these three goals, individuals cannot fully realize their place in society or their capacity to transform society.

In order to change the world, people must have accurate knowledge of it. Action based on false or flawed knowledge can only lead to failure and error. Accurate knowledge does not, however, exist independently of the social consciousness of the individual. Rather, people produce knowledge in a complex dialectic between the reality that they observe and the consciousness that they bring to their observations. Knowledge becomes meaningful and important when the process of gaining it is intimately interconnected with both social concerns and the position and interests of people as social agents. Accurate knowledge, therefore, is possible only from a critical stance. If people do not question the ethics, politics, epistemology, and reality behind their knowledge, then their actions in the world will be unsound and may result in unanticipated consequences that can be counterproductive or even harmful. Marxist critiques challenge how people use the reality of the world, the social context they exist in, and their own interests in creating knowledge. These critiques involve a questioning of different visions or interpretations of knowledge and a self-examination of one's own perspectives. They must ultimately rest in the reality of the observable world, however, because if they do

not, then they will only lead to self-delusion and fantasy. By the same token, these critiques should be coupled with collective action. Just as reality without critique equals self-delusion, critique without action produces only nihilism and despair.

Along these lines, Marxists argue that to take effective collective action in the world, individuals need to reflect on their larger social contexts. The political, ideological, and ethnic confrontations of the last three decades have led many social scientists to conclude that taking action in the world without concrete knowledge of that world inevitably leads to erroneous and pernicious results. In the same way, collective action that springs from knowledge and converts it into a rich platform for debate and critique avoids the tendency toward self-delusion and totalitarianism that lurk in isolated and unexamined knowledge or in absolute truths.

People realize praxis in the articulation of knowledge, critique, and collective action, all based in the concrete world. Praxis enriched by knowledge, critique, and action can exist only within real contexts of social relations, social struggles, social interests, and social agents. Praxis cannot exist in the abstract (McGuire et al. 2005).

A Dialectical Marxism

There is no simple or unambiguous way to define the dialectic, and disagreements about the nature of the dialectic define differences within Marxist thought (Ollman 1976:238–240; Sherman 1995:235–240). The Hegelian dialectic is just one of many concepts of the dialectic that exist in Marxism and in Western thought in general (Ollman 1976, 1992, 2003; Sayer 1987; Gottlieb 1989; Agger 1997; Roseberry 1997; Jacoby 2002). It is one of two concepts of the dialectic currently used in Western archaeology.

At least five major elements of a dialectical Marxism have important implications for a praxis of archaeology: a relational dialectical method; a relational theory of society; the concept of collective agency; an emphasis on knowing the world through the lived experience of people (everyday life) as opposed to the description of artifacts or a search for abstract models, laws, or theories of cultural change; and a self-reflexive awareness of archaeology's place in the modern world.

The Dialectic Although two different dialectical approaches exist in Western archaeology today, they share some basic concepts and defini-

tions of the dialectic. These shared concepts include a holistic, relational view of society in which cultural change is an internal process driven by relational contradictions, a focus on the dynamics of quantitative and qualitative change, and the use of the dialectic as a method to study change rather than as a theory that explains change. The two approaches disagree over what is the proper object of a dialectical method. Classical Marxists in archaeology have adopted a dialectics of nature that applies the dialectic to nature and society. Dialectical Marxists use a Hegelian, or relational, dialectic that can be applied to the study of society but not to the study of nature.

The dialectic views society as a whole (Ollman 1976, 1992, 2003; Sayer 1987), as a complex interconnected web, within which any given entity is defined by its relationship to other entities, unable to exist in isolation. As Bertell Ollman has noted: “Dialectics restructures our notions about reality by replacing the common sense notion of ‘thing’ (as something that has history and external connections with other things) with the notion of ‘process’ (which contains its history and potential futures) and ‘relations’ (which contain as part of what it is its ties with other relations)” (2003:13). For example, you cannot have husbands without wives; each social entity (thing) exists because of the existence of its opposite. It is the underlying relationship of marriage that creates both husbands and wives. If the interconnectedness is broken (divorce), the opposites dissolve or, more properly, are transformed into something else (ex-husband and ex-wife). The dialectical method seeks to penetrate the observable reality of social entities such as husbands and wives to reveal the underlying social relationships that create these entities. This is the method that Patterson (2003:8) captures in his metaphor of peeling an onion.

In the dialectic, the entities that make up the social whole are not expected to fit comfortably together. They may fit, but the dynamics of change lie not in these functional relations but in the relational dialectical contradictions that spring from the fact that social categories are defined by and require the existence of their opposite. Thus, in the antebellum South of the United States, slavery defines both the master and the slave. The existence of masters requires the existence of slaves, yet the two are opposites and as such are potentially in conflict. Each participates in the relationship of slavery, but each has a different lived experience of slavery. For the master, it is an experience of wealth, freedom, comfort, and privilege. The master’s experience depends on the slave’s experience of poverty, want, and oppression. Thus, the slave and the master have dif-

ferent interests in the relationship that defines them both. Social change results from the conflict and contradictions inherent in such relations.

Change in these relations is never simply quantitative (changes of degree) or qualitative (transformative or revolutionary). Quantitative changes lead to qualitative change, and qualitative change necessarily implies a quantitative change. Conflicts that result from relational contradictions may result in quantitative changes that build to a qualitative change in those relations. Rebellion by slaves may lead the masters to enforce stricter and stricter controls, thereby heightening slave resistance until the relation of slavery is overthrown. The social relations that result from such a qualitative change are a mix of the old and the new; the old social form is remade, not replaced.

The dialectic does not explain or predict how change and interaction occur (Ollman 2003:12). Rather, it is a method that leads the scholar to understand change and interaction by providing appropriate questions. The test of the dialectic as a method is its utility (Sherman 1995:218): Does it help us choose important problems? Does it guide the researcher to the empirical observations needed to consider those problems? Does it provide a framework for evaluating those observations, a framework that helps the scholar solve the problems, formulate new theory and problems, and take action in the world?

Classical Marxists tend to accept Engels's (1927) concept of the dialectics of nature, applying the dialectic to the study of both the natural and the social world. Engels argued that Marxist concepts used in the study of society can be used in the study of nature. This perspective suggests that natural relationships such as that between cougar (predator) and deer (prey) can be understood in the same way as social unities such as the master and the slave. A dialectics of nature seeks the general laws governing the development of nature, science, society, and thought (Woods and Grant 1995:15). The role of the scholar is to gain knowledge of the world, then from this knowledge derive the laws of motion that drive social change and through this knowledge shape social change (Woods and Grant 1995:140).

In contrast, humanistic dialectical Marxists see the dialectic as a uniquely social phenomenon. A relational dialectic treats Marxism as a theory of relations and treats society as a complex web of social relations, within which the nature of any entity is governed by its relation to other entities. Dialectical Marxists argue that the dialectic between social entities, such as master and slave, depends on the entities having an underlying unity, which comes from their common humanity. Such a

unity cannot exist in the study of nature. A master may become a slave, and a slave may become a master. The deer (prey), however, cannot become a cougar (predator). The study of nature produces scientists, but it does not produce nature; the study of geology creates geologists, but it does not create rocks. By contrast, the scholar may be the subject and the object of the study; it is the relationship inherent in study that creates scholars (subjects) and informants (objects). For humanistic Marxists, critique lies at the core of research. The scholar obtains knowledge of the world through observation but must be constantly critical of how and why that knowledge is accepted.

The unity of subject and object that characterizes the study of the social world exists even when archaeologists study people who are long dead. The dead cannot study the archaeologist, but it is their silence that allows many archaeologists to define scientific goals as objective, universal, or even in the interest of the dead. We cannot alienate the dead, but the assertion of an objective, universal, or true archaeology becomes a way to alienate the living from their past and to advance, justify, and maintain the inequities of today (McGuire 1992a; Watkins 2000; Fforde et al. 2002; Fforde 2004; McNiven and Russell 2005).

A Relational Concept of Society The Hegelian dialectic makes social relations rather than social entities the key to studying society. The existence of individual humans necessarily implies the existence of society, and the existence of society necessarily implies the existence of individuals. A relational dialectic does not view the social world as made up of individuals (things) but instead sees the social world and individuals as products of underlying social relationships and processes. From the standpoint of dialectical praxis, humans make history as members of collective groups.

A relational dialectic defines society as a network of interrelated differences. Difference is inherent in society, because underlying social relationships create social categories that are the opposite of each other, such as master and slave. Conflict is intrinsic in these social oppositions. Individuals negotiate identities, social characteristics, and consciousness through their relationship to others in these social networks. They do so within the social structures that these relationships create, but in doing so they also have the potential to transform the social structures. These individuals do not exist alone or outside the network of difference that is society, nor can they act alone in a transformative way. Thus, the important question for praxis is, How do individuals create a shared consciousness of group identity and interest that allows them to act as a

group in a transformative way? In a relational view, the dynamics of social change cannot be reduced to the economy, human psychology, or action of individuals. A relational concept of collective agency allows us to understand how people make history.

Collective Agency Society changes because of human action, but all human action is dependent on the existence of society. As Marx wrote: “People make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under given circumstances directly encountered and inherited from the past” (1978:9).³ Social structures, ideologies, and material conditions inherited from the past both enable and limit this agency, yet these same structures, ideologies, and conditions are products of conscious human action. People inherit the material conditions created in the past, and people will create the material conditions of the future. This dialectic between the past and the present creates a future through the dialectic of agency and structure. Understanding collective agency allows us to participate in the struggles of contemporary constituencies and creates the possibility of making the archaeological project part of transformational social projects.

Archaeologists have recognized that human agency is always social; thus, people never act simply as individuals (Silliman 2001). Even the act of being a hermit is social. Individuals can exist only in a web of social relations, and agency is realized through these relations. When individuals join together in collective action, their agency may transform these relations. Put another way, agency presupposes a web of social relationships and meanings, yet these social relations and meanings are themselves products of conscious human action.

Even the unintentional changes that fascinate practice theorists in archaeology entail goal-oriented social agency (Barrett 2000; Pauketat 2000; for a critique see Bernbeck 2003a). This is well illustrated by the classic case of unintended consequences, the tragedy of the commons (Hardin 1968; Pauketat 2000). In William Forster Lloyd’s (1833) parable of the English commons, cattle herders personally gain greater income by grazing more cattle on the village commons, and each cattle herder makes an individual decision to maximize his or her income through this increased grazing. The unintended consequences of these individual actions is the overgrazing of the commons, resulting in the loss of all income by all herders and the loss of the right to the commons. This parable might appear to be an example of individual agency and unintended consequences, but it actually assumes individuals

embedded in social relations acting as social agents. The right to the commons is a social relationship. Also, the only way that the herders could benefit from herding more cattle than the number for which they had use value was through the existence of a market in which to sell the cattle. That is, these herders had to engage in the social relations of the market in order to reach the decision to graze more cattle. Thus, social relations enabled and limited the decisions these herders could make, and the consequences of these decisions transformed these relations. The unintended consequences of individual agency may cause change, but this is not what brought about the demise of the English commons in reality.

Archaeologists, like many other scholars, have assumed that the tragedy of the commons was a frequent event in medieval and postmedieval England, but this belief is incorrect (Cox 1985; Neeson 2004). English law granted the right to commons only to members of the community or to individuals who provided services to a lord. Law and custom regulated who could use the commons and how many animals they could graze there, all in recognition of the carrying capacity of the land (Cox 1985:55). The social relations of the commons worked for hundreds of years in England and came to an end only through the praxis of the landed classes. Landlords enclosed or took possession of the commons. They increased their profits by applying improved agricultural techniques and selling wool to supply the mills driving the industrial revolution. Enclosure was a conscious and calculated movement by the landed classes (Neeson 2004). As part of this movement, they had to “reform” agricultural laws and discredit existing customs. Lloyd (1833) wrote his parable during the debates over the 1832 Enclosure Acts. The tragedy of the commons originated not as history but rather as an ideological myth to advance enclosure. It survives today as a right-wing fable that denies the efficacy of communalism.

Praxis implies something more than embodied practice, something more than practical consciousness, and something more than individuals simply making self-interested decisions. Agency becomes praxis only when social groups collectively seek transformational change to advance their interests (Gramsci 1971; Crehan 2002). Transformative praxis springs from communal action. One hand did not tear down the Berlin Wall, Martin Luther King did not march on Washington alone, the Stonewall riot did not involve a single rowdy homosexual, and Hitler did not by his own hand kill six million Jews.

People make history as members of social groups whose common

consciousness derives from shared social relations and lived experiences and from common interests, cultures, and ideologies that link them to one another and oppose them to other social groups. They create this consciousness through their shared experience of day-to-day life. A shared consciousness exists when members of the group identify with other members of the group and develop an awareness of the relationship of their group to other social groups. The solidarity of lived experience may be based in class, gender, ethnicity, or race, or more commonly in some combination of these identities.

Antonio Gramsci (1971; Crehan 2002) argued that shared consciousness originates in common experience but that this experience does not automatically give rise to solidarity. Consciousness raising usually requires individuals acting as intellectuals, activists, organizers, and provocateurs to first mold the raw material of experience into consciousness. If group members recognize this consciousness as their own individual situation and if they are moved to act in solidarity, then collective agency will occur. The task of scholars is to produce knowledge and critique. For those scholars who seek to engage in praxis, that knowledge and critique should be based in a genuine understanding of the experience of the social group whose interest their scholarship serves. Praxis, therefore, flows from a dialogue or dialectic between intellectuals and the communities they serve.

The relationship of individuals to one another and to social groups is complex. Individuals participate in multiple relations within social groups, and they may participate in multiple groups. The inequality and exploitation that usually exist within social groups further complicate the relationship. Also, individuals may participate in various groups that have different or even contradictory social interests. People do not experience these relations and their multiple identities in isolation; rather, their experience flows from the interrelationships among social groups and identities in the social reality in which they participate. Furthermore, just because individuals participate in the same social reality does not mean that they will have the same experience. The lived experience in the coalfields of southern Colorado in the first decades of the twentieth century differed between husbands and wives, between company managers and miners. Thus, the axis of solidarity and experience that will be used to create a social consciousness will depend on the specific historical context of its creation.

Transformative collective agency will not always succeed. People may know what change they want, but almost inevitably their efforts to effect

it will result in unintended consequences. Powerful groups within society will also actively seek to prevent such consciousness from rising in order to preserve their own interests. Social groups may also try but fail to form a collective consciousness and thus be ineffective agents. Competing identities and differences in experience may hinder the forming of group consciousness. Consciousness raising may succeed when struggle against a greater oppression transcends these differences or when groups with different interests can define mutual goals. Collective agency creates a very complex arena in which we as archaeologists seek to understand change and to build a radical archaeological praxis.

Knowing the World Collective agency is both contingent and unpredictable. The prior conditions of a historical sequence, material relations, social structures, culture, and ideology define a range of possibilities for collective action. Which actions people will undertake, however, are not determined but contingent on both prior conditions and the subjective evaluations that people make of them (Roseberry 1997). The conditions that structure human action leave broad channels and lots of room for actions and consequences that cannot be known in advance. Small changes in events or circumstances, actions taken or not taken, can, over time, have dramatic and unforeseeable consequences for the course of history. Praxis occurs when people consciously try to chart their way through these channels. The starting point for praxis, therefore, is a historical understanding of society and prior agency to identify what the channels are, how they are bounded, and where they might lead.

The substantive analyses in this book begin with historical considerations of the prior conditions that channel praxis. The class structure of archaeology today is legitimated by a guild ideology of the discipline that reflects the history of the field rather than the modern realities. When we began archaeological research in Sonora, México, along the U.S. Mexican border, we stepped into preexisting social relations, social structures, economies, politics, and ideologies. The Ludlow Collective's study of the Colorado Coalfield War analyzes the collective agency and praxis of early twentieth-century miners to demonstrate why such praxis must be continued in the present to maintain the rights and dignity of working families. Following Marx, our analyses focus on the everyday lived experience of people in these cases.

Marx's method opens the way to the recovery of history, but it does not predict the course of that history (Sayer 1979:199). It provides a

guide for how scholars can understand and analyze concrete cases of social change in order to make social change in the future. The key to this method is the study of real lived experience. In his own historical studies of transformational change, Marx (1978) started with real individuals, their actions, and the material (economic) conditions under which they lived, both those that they inherited from the past and those that they created through their actions. He examined how people acted within and on social, political, and cultural relationships, institutions, and structures, reproducing some and changing others (Roseberry 1997:30). In order to do this, these individuals had to have certain understandings, images, and beliefs about who they were and what they were doing. Marx undertook historical studies of transformative change because he rejected the idea that such changes are predetermined, inevitable, or predictable. He studied history to build praxis. His historical studies were commentaries on movements and attempts to shape them to change the world (Roseberry 1997:39).

A Marxist analysis starts with an analysis of economic relationships, focusing on the relations between classes and class factions (Wurst 2006). The method of Marxist class analysis can, however, be applied to any social groups that have common interests and consciousness (Bloch 1985:162–163). Any group of individuals who share an identity and interests and can form a group consciousness may engage in collective agency. This realization opens the door for complex analyses from multiple vantage points (Patterson 2003:12), including gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and age, in addition to classes and class factions. Regardless of these other vantage points, Marxist analyses always examine the lived experience of the oppressed, the marginalized, and the forgotten. The economic vantage point is essential to reveal secret writings. Marxism shares this vantage point with other approaches to emancipatory archaeology. We see it in the Argentinean studies of the Club Atlético (Weissel 2003:29–30; Acuto 2003), in Lynn Meskell's analyses of archaeology and violence in Egypt (2003, 2005), and in Rosemary Joyce's critiques of cultural tourism and the Ruta Maya (2003, 2005).

My substantive analyses in this book focus on communities and class factions that have not traditionally been included in archaeology. I read the secret writings aloud in order to build praxis. To include the oppressed, the marginal, and the forgotten in our analyses, archaeologists need to first be self-reflexive about the social and political positioning of archaeology in order to understand the power relations we exist in and contribute to.

Critiquing the World Just as it is people who make history, it is also people who write history and do archaeology. As scholars, we are also social beings who live and work in a social context. Our social, cultural, and political point of view affects how we see the world, what questions we ask, what assumptions we make, what observations we value, and what answers we accept. Our understandings of the past must always fit the knowledge we have of its events and practices, but many explanations of these will always fit. A dialectical point of view urges us to accept that even though the past is real, our knowledge of it is always made in the present, and this knowledge is never a simple product of either past or present but a complex mix of both. Our assessments cannot be complete unless we also ask why we, as socially situated scholars, choose to raise the particular questions that we ask and why we might favor one possible explanation over another.

To answer these questions, we can study archaeology's history as a material social process (Trigger 1989a, 2006; Patterson 1986, 2003; Kehoe 1998). Our own history bequeaths beliefs and social relations to us as social beings and scholars. This inheritance conditions our scholarship, setting up paths of least resistance that we may travel without realizing why we took them or what the repercussions of our journey may be, for ourselves or others. A self-critical historical analysis reveals alternative paths and asks why the paths we are following appeared to us, why we should follow them, to what ends they can take us, and whose interests they serve? With such knowledge we can, hopefully, more wisely navigate our journey.

Recognizing that archaeology is a social product and process and that multiple stories, addressing different interests in the present, may always exist raises questions of what interests archaeology should serve and how these interests are best served. North American archaeology legitimately serves the academy, the people who pay for our work, the museum going public, indigenous nations, and many other communities. The interests of these various communities may be in harmony or in conflict or irrelevant to one another. Archaeologists have not given enough attention to identifying these interests or to building dialogues between those interests and us (Shanks and McGuire 1996; Faulkner 2000; Moser et al. 2002).

As socially engaged scholars, Marxists and other emancipatory archaeologists should remember that we cannot trust in "correct" theory or "true" knowledge of the world to direct our praxis. Critique must remain a constant and central part of what we do. We also need to avoid totalitarian theories. Social theories become totalitarian when they claim

that their perspective identifies the determinants of social forms and thus serves as a way to engineer change in those forms. The feminist idea of entry point gives us a way to break this linkage by treating social theories as entry points to study social relations, with the recognition that, in any given case, multiple entry points will be possible and may give compatible interpretations that reinforce one another (Wylie 1991). A pluralistic praxis of alliance and common struggle can be built from these intersectionalities (Conkey 2005b).

Commentators have appropriately criticized Marxism for not adequately considering social factors such as gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity (Hartman 1981; Sargent 1981; Taylor 1990). If scholars accept a totalitarian notion of Marxism (class is the root of all exploitation), or a totalitarian notion of feminism (gender is the root of all exploitation), or a totalitarian notion of queer theory (sexuality is the root of all exploitation), or a totalitarian notion of race theory (race is the root of all exploitation), then Marxism must be at odds with all of these other approaches. The feminist perspective of entry point, however, offers an alternative (Wylie 1991). If we are to take the diversity and complexity of oppression seriously, we must recognize that it derives from many relationships, including those of gender, sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity. Each of these provides an entry point to the study of social relations and oppression. Marxists enter the study of the social world with the analysis of class, and from this entry point we should examine its complex relationships with gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity in the construction of oppression. Other socially engaged scholars use other entry points. For example, feminists begin their analysis with gender. As long as feminists seek a radical transformation of gender relations that must also address class, sexuality, race, and ethnicity (hooks 2000; Sanahuja 2002), and Marxists recognize that relations of class also involve relations of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, then the intersection of multiple approaches can produce compatible and complementary praxis (Wurst 2006).⁴

Following from Antonio Gramsci (1971), the emphasis in this book is on how class is lived by people. That is, on how people experience class in their everyday existence (Wurst 1999, 2006). People live class as gendered, ethnic, sexual, and racial social beings (Crehan 2002:195). Addressing class as a social lived phenomenon means that all aspects of the social condition ought to be considered in the analysis and interpretation of history and the building of praxis.

The Marxist theory of relational dialectics that I have advocated here

leads me to an emancipatory praxis of archaeology. This is not the only theory that may lead to political action. Indeed, archaeologists using other theories have sought to build praxis, sometimes with different goals and usually with alternative entry points. Multiple theories produce the debate and dialogue that help archaeologists better know the world, critique the world, and take action in the world. In chapter 2, I will compare processualist, post-processualist, Marxist, feminist, and indigenous efforts to build archaeological praxis. My theory of praxis builds on a foundation of these efforts and draws on the intersectionalities among Marxist, feminist, and indigenous archaeologies (Conkey 2005b).

NOTES

1. In Great Britain the term *traveler* refers to a variety of social groups who generally move around the country and have no permanent abode. This includes ethnic Gypsies, Irish tinkers, and, starting in the 1960s, a group of New Age travelers who formed around a free festival circuit that came to include Stonehenge.

2. The Navajo and Hopi nations have been engaged in a long-running dispute concerning control of land in northeastern Arizona. The dispute originated in 1882, when the president of the United States established the Hopi reservation and then later settled Navajo people on land originally assigned to the Hopi. The conflict continues today on the ground, in the courts, and in Congress. It has involved and deeply divided anthropologists and archaeologists who work with or for each nation (Benedek 1999).

3. The usual English translation of this quote begins “[Men] make history,” but this translation is inaccurate. In the original German, Marx used the noun *Menschen*, which translates as “people,” not as “men.” The German word for “men” is *Mannschaft*.

4. I should note that all contemporary Western Marxists in archaeology do not agree with my advocacy of Marxism as a method for understanding social life as opposed to Marxism as an explanation of the social world or my advocacy of class as an entry point to study society as opposed to class as a determinant of the social world. Many times Marxist colleagues have told me that an approach that grants importance to social factors other than class is not really Marxist (Gilman 1993). Ultimately, the issue is changing the world, not defining what “Marxism really is.” My reply to these critics can be found in the prologue of the reprinting of *A Marxist Archaeology* (McGuire 2002b) and in the totality of this book.